

# COMPREHENSIVE ENGLISH

The University of the State of New York

REGENTS HIGH SCHOOL EXAMINATION

## COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

IN

## ENGLISH

**Thursday, June 18, 2015 — 1:15 to 4:15 p.m., only**

The possession or use of any communications device is strictly prohibited when taking this examination. If you have or use any communications device, no matter how briefly, your examination will be invalidated and no score will be calculated for you.

A separate answer sheet has been provided for you. Follow the instructions for completing the student information on your answer sheet. You must also fill in the heading on each page of your essay booklet that has a space for it, and write your name at the top of each sheet of scrap paper.

The examination has four parts. Part 1 tests listening skills; you are to answer all eight multiple-choice questions. For Part 2, you are to answer all twelve multiple-choice questions. For Part 3, you are to answer all five multiple-choice questions and the two short constructed-response questions. For Part 4, you are to write one essay response. The two short constructed-response questions and the essay response should be written in pen.

When you have completed the examination, you must sign the statement printed at the bottom of the front of the answer sheet, indicating that you had no unlawful knowledge of the questions or answers prior to the examination and that you have neither given nor received assistance in answering any of the questions during the examination. Your answer sheet cannot be accepted if you fail to sign this declaration.

**DO NOT OPEN THIS EXAMINATION BOOKLET UNTIL THE SIGNAL IS GIVEN.**



## NOTES

**DO NOT TURN THIS PAGE UNTIL YOU ARE TOLD TO DO SO.**

## Part 1 (Questions 1–8)

### Multiple-Choice Questions

**Directions** (1–8): Use your notes to answer the following questions about the passage read to you. Select the best suggested answer to each question and record your answer on the separate answer sheet provided for you.

- 1 One purpose of the information presented at the beginning of the account is to describe the level of 19th century
    - (1) artistic activity
    - (2) intellectual freedom
    - (3) scientific knowledge
    - (4) creative ability
  - 2 The speaker includes the definition of a planet as “wanderer” in order to introduce a
    - (1) discovery about the stars
    - (2) myth about scientists
    - (3) concern about the galaxy
    - (4) theory about technology
  - 3 According to the speaker, astronomers’ ability to calculate a star’s distance from Earth and its position in the sky allows them to discover its
    - (1) size
    - (2) age
    - (3) brightness
    - (4) movement
  - 4 According to the account, the development of “a three-dimensional view of the heavens” led scientists to an
    - (1) investigation of the moon’s dark side
    - (2) expanded view of the universe’s galaxies
    - (3) accurate knowledge of Earth’s size
    - (4) understanding of planets’ orbits
  - 5 According to the account, Lewis Boss can be described as a
    - (1) successful inventor
    - (2) published scholar
    - (3) sought-after speaker
    - (4) self-taught scientist
  - 6 One strength Lewis Boss found in the women mathematicians working for him was their
    - (1) prior experience
    - (2) patience
    - (3) loyalty
    - (4) reasoning skills
  - 7 According to the account, the primary purpose of the Dudley Observatory’s current educational outreach program is to
    - (1) promote interest in astronomy
    - (2) raise college scholarship funds
    - (3) obtain new scientific grants
    - (4) offer adult education courses
  - 8 The overall purpose of the account is to
    - (1) persuade
    - (2) inform
    - (3) entertain
    - (4) evaluate
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## Part 2 (Questions 9–20)

**Directions** (9–20): Below each passage, there are several multiple-choice questions. Select the best suggested answer to each question and record your answer on the separate answer sheet provided for you.

### Reading Comprehension Passage A

- Call walked the river for an hour, though he knew there was no real need. It was just an old habit he had, left over from wilder times: checking, looking for [a] sign of one kind or another, honing his instincts, as much as anything. In his years as a Ranger captain it had been his habit to get off by himself for a time, every night, out of camp and away from whatever talking and bickering were going on. He had discovered early on that his instincts needed privacy in which to operate. Sitting around a fire being sociable, yawning and yarning, might be fine in safe country, but it could cost you an edge in country that wasn't so safe. He liked to get off by himself, a mile or so from camp, and listen to the country, not the men.
- 5 Of course, real scouting skills were superfluous in a place as tame as Lonesome Dove, but Call still liked to get out at night, sniff the breeze and let the country talk. The country talked quiet; one human voice could drown it out, particularly if it was a voice as loud as Augustus McCrae's. Augustus was notorious all over Texas for the strength of his voice. On a still night he could be heard at least a mile, even if he was more or less whispering. Call did his best to get out of range of Augustus's voice so that he could relax and pay attention to other sounds. If nothing else, he might get a clue as to what weather was coming—not that there was much mystery about the weather around Lonesome Dove. If a man looked straight up at the stars he was apt to get dizzy, the night was so clear. Clouds were scarcer than cash money, and cash money was scarce enough.
- 10 There was really little in the way of a threat to be looked for, either. A coyote might sneak in and snatch a chicken, but that was about the worst that was likely to happen. The mere fact that he and Augustus were there had long since discouraged the local horsethieves. ...
- 15 He tried hard to keep sharp, but in fact the only action he had scared up in six months of watching the river was one bandit, who might just have been a *vaquero*<sup>1</sup> with a thirsty horse. All Call had had to do in that instance was click the hammer of his Henry—in the still night the click had been as effective as a shot. The man wheeled back into Mexico, and since then nothing had disturbed the crossing except a few mangy goats on their way to the salt lick. ...
- 20 But somehow, despite the dangers, Call had never felt pressed in quite the way he had lately, bound in by the small but constant needs of others. The physical work didn't matter: Call was not one to sit on a porch all day, playing cards or gossiping. He intended to work; he had just grown tired of always providing the example. He was still the Captain, but no one had seemed to notice that there was no troop and no war. He had been in charge so long that everyone assumed all thoughts, questions, needs, and wants had to be referred to him, however simple these might be. The men couldn't stop expecting him to [c]aptain, and he couldn't stop thinking he had to. It was ingrained<sup>2</sup> in him, he had done it so long, but he was aware that it wasn't appropriate anymore. They weren't even peace officers: they just ran a livery stable, trading horses and cattle when they could find a buyer.
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<sup>1</sup>vaquero — cowboy or herdsman

<sup>2</sup>ingrained — deep rooted

40 The work they did was mostly work he could do in his sleep, and yet, though his day-to-day responsibilities had constantly shrunk over the last ten years, life did not seem easier. It just seemed smaller and a good deal more dull. ...

—Larry McMurtry  
excerpted and adapted from *Lonesome Dove*, 1985  
Simon and Schuster

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| <p>9 As used in the passage, the word “honing” (line 3) most nearly means</p> <p>(1) forgetting                      (3) measuring<br/>(2) ignoring                        (4) sharpening</p> <p>10 According to the narrator, Call was in the habit of going “off by himself” (line 8) because he</p> <p>(1) missed his former military duties<br/>(2) questioned the worth of storytelling<br/>(3) wanted to avoid distractions<br/>(4) irritated the men around him</p> <p>11 The description of the country, “Of course ... McCrae’s” (lines 10 through 13), is an example of</p> <p>(1) personification                (3) flashback<br/>(2) alliteration                        (4) juxtaposition</p> | <p>12 According to the narrator, the weather around “Lonesome Dove” (lines 16 and 17) could best be described as</p> <p>(1) helpful for crop growth<br/>(2) fairly predictable over time<br/>(3) harmful to financial success<br/>(4) mostly cloudy during daytime</p> <p>13 According to the passage, Call is disturbed by the fact that he is viewed as a</p> <p>(1) snob                                (3) leader<br/>(2) farmer                              (4) thief</p> <p>14 This passage is developed primarily through the use of</p> <p>(1) irony                                (3) foreshadowing<br/>(2) characterization                (4) hyperbole</p> |
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## Reading Comprehension Passage B

...We, the new explorers for the modern age, must rely to the fullest on the traditional explorer's greatest asset: the human intellect. Unlike any other species on Earth, human beings have the ability to look back in time and to learn. We know the strengths of the great ancient civilizations as well as the catastrophic mistakes that crumbled empires. It was the traditional explorer who blazed a trail to this past. The new explorers—all of us—must use that trail to find our way to the future, to chart our course, and our children's course, into the unknowns ahead.

The past age of the lone explorer, Boorstin<sup>1</sup> wrote, opened at a time when medieval cartographers did not place "North" at the top of their maps. At the upper margins of their parchments they drew instead a mysterious spot they imagined in the east: paradise, which no living human had ever entered. Monks, looking for this garden "where Earth joins the sky," became the first explorers; next, pilgrims wandered in search of the holy place; then crusaders forged into new lands in the name of God; and finally, missionaries infiltrated farther into Earth's unknown corridors—all of them pushing back the boundaries of their world in quest of paradise.

On one of my own voyages, I think I found it.

*Calypso* was exploring the waters of the Aleutian Islands, in Alaska. We sailed into an unreal world—the sky, the ice, the water, all brushed by the indescribable light that makes dusk indistinguishable from dawn during the season of the midnight sun. After I dropped anchor off the island of Unalaska, our chief diver, Raymond Coll, climbed into our diving saucer and took it down for a search under the surface of the sea. Raymond, who stayed in contact with me by sonar telephone, described walruses and whales, vast pink fields of krill—icy waters that brimmed with life.

Above, on board *Calypso*, the team was uncharacteristically preoccupied with another endeavor altogether. NASA had just landed a module on the moon, and the entire *Calypso* crew crowded onto the fantail to listen raptly to the radio, awaiting the announcement that a human being, Neil Armstrong, was about to step onto the lunar surface.

Excitement electrified the atmosphere on board. We barely breathed. And then, Armstrong's voice. A cheer rose from the deck and echoed in the crystal air. I switched on my sonar link with Coll. "Raymond! Historic news! Armstrong is walking on the moon!"

I felt a proud sense of fraternity that day with the NASA explorers who were reaching into the distant corners of space even as our little team explored the depths of the sea. Yet I also felt a sense of privilege that had to do not with the astronauts, but with the wet, blue Earth on which they were gazing. Out in space, a human being stepped through dry lunar dust. But Raymond sailed through a myriad<sup>2</sup> of life, undersea on the solar system's only planet awash with liquid water.

Several years later, the astronaut Alan Bean spoke to me about his own space voyage. From the moon, he watched Earth spin through cycles of night and day. When the dark side of Earth faced him, our planet appeared to be encircled by a girdle of sparks. It took him quite some time to realize that these tiny glimmers were flashes of lightning from the quasi-permanent thunderstorms that ring the equator. He marveled: "The Earth looked like a scintillating jewel."

<sup>1</sup>Boorstin — Daniel Boorstin is the author of *The Discoverers*, a history of exploration

<sup>2</sup>myriad — a great number

And that it is—the very reason why searching for ways to safeguard Earth is such a necessity and such a joy. After all, the road to paradise—as the Spanish proverb goes—is  
45 paradise.

—Jacques Cousteau and Susan Schiefelbein  
excerpted from *The Human, The Orchid, and the Octopus*, 2007  
Bloomsbury

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| <p>15 Lines 8 through 15 indicate that medieval mapmakers believed that an explorer traveling east should ultimately reach the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) northern regions of the Earth</li><li>(2) area of hostile creatures</li><li>(3) place of unmatched beauty</li><li>(4) land forbidden to strangers</li></ul> <p>16 The crew of the <i>Calypso</i> viewed Neil Armstrong’s landing on the moon with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) jealousy                      (3) disbelief</li><li>(2) joy                              (4) calm</li></ul> <p>17 The author “felt a proud sense of fraternity” (line 31) with the “NASA explorers” (line 31) because they both</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) sacrificed their privacy</li><li>(2) shared detailed accounts</li><li>(3) received great praise</li><li>(4) braved unfamiliar territory</li></ul> | <p>18 According to the author, a major purpose of exploration today is to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) find habitable planets</li><li>(2) discover unpolluted water</li><li>(3) protect the Earth</li><li>(4) increase the food supply</li></ul> <p>19 The passage is primarily developed through the use of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) statistics</li><li>(2) personal anecdotes</li><li>(3) rhetorical questions</li><li>(4) hypothesis</li></ul> <p>20 The tone of the passage can best be described as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) optimistic                      (3) hostile</li><li>(2) ironic                              (4) suspenseful</li></ul> |
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## Part 3 (Questions 21–27)

**Directions:** On the following pages read Passage I (an excerpt from a memoir) and Passage II (a poem) about life choices. You may use the margins to take notes as you read. Answer the multiple-choice questions on the answer sheet provided for you. Then write your response for question 26 on page 1 of your essay booklet and question 27 on page 2 of your essay booklet.

### Passage I

...Chris and I are traveling to Montana with some friends riding up ahead, and maybe headed farther than that. Plans are deliberately indefinite, more to travel than to arrive anywhere. We are just vacationing. Secondary roads are preferred. Paved county roads are the best, state highways are next. Freeways are the worst. We want to make good time, but  
5 for us now this is measured with emphasis on “good” rather than “time” and when you make that shift in emphasis the whole approach changes. Twisting hilly roads are long in terms of seconds but are much more enjoyable on a cycle where you bank into turns and don’t get swung from side to side in any compartment. Roads with little traffic are more enjoyable, as well as safer. Roads free of drive-ins and billboards are better, roads where groves and  
10 meadows and orchards and lawns come almost to the shoulder, where kids wave to you when you ride by, where people look from their porches to see who it is, where when you stop to ask directions or information the answer tends to be longer than you want rather than short, where people ask where you’re from and how long you’ve been riding.

It was some years ago that my wife and I and our friends first began to catch on to these  
15 roads. We took them once in a while for variety or for a shortcut to another main highway, and each time the scenery was grand and we left the road with a feeling of relaxation and enjoyment. We did this time after time before realizing what should have been obvious: these roads are truly different from the main ones. The whole pace of life and personality of the people who live along them are different. They’re not going anywhere. They’re not  
20 too busy to be courteous. The hereness and nowness of things is something they know all about. It’s the others, the ones who moved to the cities years ago and their lost offspring, who have all but forgotten it. The discovery was a real find.

I’ve wondered why it took us so long to catch on. We saw it and yet we didn’t see it. Or rather we were trained *not* to see it. Conned, perhaps, into thinking that the real action was  
25 metropolitan and all this was just boring hinterland. It was a puzzling thing. The truth knocks on the door and you say, “Go away, I’m looking for the truth,” and so it goes away. Puzzling. ...

We have learned how to spot the good ones on a map, for example. If the line wiggles, that’s good. That means hills. If it appears to be the main route from a town to a city, that’s  
30 bad. The best ones always connect nowhere with nowhere and have an alternate that gets you there quicker. If you are going northeast from a large town you never go straight out of town for any long distance. You go out and then start jogging north, then east, then north again, and soon you are on a secondary route that only the local people use. ...

On Labor Day and Memorial Day weekends we travel for miles on these roads without  
35 seeing another vehicle, then cross a federal highway and look at cars strung bumper to bumper to the horizon. Scowling faces inside. Kids crying in the back seat. I keep wishing there were some way to tell them something but they scowl and appear to be in a hurry, and there isn’t. ...

—Robert M. Pirsig  
excerpted from *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, 1974  
William Morrow & Company, Inc.

**Passage II**  
**The Journey**

One day you finally knew  
what you had to do, and began,  
though the voices around you  
kept shouting  
5 their bad advice —  
though the whole house  
began to tremble  
and you felt the old tug  
at your ankles.  
10 “Mend my life!”  
each voice cried.  
But you didn’t stop.  
You knew what you had to do,  
though the wind pried  
15 with its stiff fingers  
at the very foundations —  
though their melancholy  
was terrible.  
It was already late  
20 enough, and a wild night,  
and the road full of fallen  
branches and stones.  
But little by little,  
as you left their voices behind,  
25 the stars began to burn  
through the sheets of clouds,  
and there was a new voice,  
which you slowly  
recognized as your own,  
30 that kept you company  
as you strode deeper and deeper  
into the world,  
determined to do  
the only thing you could do —  
35 determined to save  
the only life you could save.

—Mary Oliver  
from *Dream Work*, 1986  
The Atlantic Monthly Press

## Multiple-Choice Questions

**Directions** (21–25): Select the best suggested answer to each question and record your answer on the separate answer sheet provided for you.

**Passage I** (the memoir excerpt) — Questions 21–22 refer to Passage I.

- 21 According to the narrator, country people who live along secondary roads differ from others in their
- |              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| (1) work     | (3) attitude |
| (2) heritage | (4) housing  |
- 22 According to the passage, the most important part of the narrator’s travel is the
- |                 |              |
|-----------------|--------------|
| (1) destination | (3) planning |
| (2) journey     | (4) return   |

**Passage II** — (the poem) — Questions 23–25 refer to Passage II.

- 23 Lines 1 through 9 suggest that the narrator’s journey will be
- |                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| (1) challenging | (3) rewarding  |
| (2) unhealthy   | (4) surprising |
- 24 The “new voice” (line 27) provides the narrator with
- |           |                |
|-----------|----------------|
| (1) love  | (3) confidence |
| (2) doubt | (4) problems   |
- 25 Lines 33 through 36 reveal that the narrator has arrived at a feeling of
- |                       |                        |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| (1) great confusion   | (3) individual loss    |
| (2) renewed happiness | (4) personal awareness |
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## Short-Response Questions

**Directions** (26–27): Write your responses to question 26 on page 1 of your essay booklet and question 27 on page 2 of your essay booklet. Be sure to answer **both** questions.

26 Write a well-developed paragraph in which you use ideas from **both** Passage I (the memoir excerpt) and Passage II (the poem) to establish a controlling idea about life choices. Develop your controlling idea using specific examples and details from **both** Passage I and Passage II.

27 Choose a specific literary element (e.g., theme, characterization, structure, point of view, etc.) or literary technique (e.g., symbolism, irony, figurative language, etc.) used by **one** of the authors. Using specific details from **either** Passage I (the memoir excerpt) **or** Passage II (the poem), in a well-developed paragraph, show how the author uses that element or technique to develop the passage.

## Part 4 (Question 28)

### Your Task:

Write a critical essay in which you discuss **two** works of literature you have read from the particular perspective of the statement that is provided for you in the **Critical Lens**. In your essay, provide a valid interpretation of the statement, agree **or** disagree with the statement as you have interpreted it, and support your opinion using specific references to appropriate literary elements from the two works. You may use scrap paper to plan your response. Write your essay beginning on page 3 of the essay booklet.

### Critical Lens:

“Show me a hero and I will write you a tragedy.”

— F. Scott Fitzgerald  
*The Crack-Up*, 1945  
New Directions

### Guidelines:

#### Be sure to

- Provide a valid interpretation of the critical lens that clearly establishes the criteria for analysis
- Indicate whether you agree **or** disagree with the statement as you have interpreted it
- Choose **two** works you have read that you believe best support your opinion
- Use the criteria suggested by the critical lens to analyze the works you have chosen
- Avoid plot summary. Instead, use specific references to appropriate literary elements (for example: theme, characterization, setting, point of view) to develop your analysis
- Organize your ideas in a unified and coherent manner
- Specify the titles and authors of the literature you choose
- Follow the conventions of standard written English





